



# Afterschool Advocate

A media outreach newsletter published by the Afterschool Alliance

Volume 13, Issue 10, October 10, 2012

## COUNTDOWN TO #LIGHTSON2012 IS ON!



*Lights On Afterschool* 2012 is nearly here! Thousands of afterschool programs across the country are ramping up to celebrate the only nationwide rally in support of afterschool programs, which keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families.

On October 18, more than a million people are expected to participate in *Lights On Afterschool* rallies, open houses, talent shows, runs/walks, program tours and other events. At each of the thousands of *Lights On* celebrations, students will showcase the skills and talents they develop at their afterschool programs, and send the message that millions more children deserve the chance to thrive in afterschool programs. This year's events will include student performances, art and essay contests, art displays, tree lightings, carnivals, family potluck meals, and much more.

### **Lights On Webinar**

Are you prepared for *Lights On Afterschool* 2012? Still looking for new ideas for your celebration? Be sure to sign up for a webinar to get some tips for your event from afterschool experts.

On Thursday, October 11 at 3:00 p.m. ET, [join](#) Afterschool Ambassadors Mark Smith (St. Mary's County Public Schools, Md.) and Byron Smalls (White Plains Youth Bureau,

N.Y.) and Afterschool Alliance Associate Kamila Thigpen for a crash course in all things *Lights On Afterschool*. Speakers on the webinar will discuss some of the unique ways communities celebrate *Lights On Afterschool* and offer tips to help programs quickly organize events.

[Sign up today](#) to participate in the webinar, **Thirteen Years of *Lights On Afterschool*: The Evolution of the Nation's Largest Rally for Afterschool!**

### **Light Up for *Lights On Afterschool* Photo Contest**

This year, Bright House Networks and the Afterschool Alliance have launched a Facebook photo contest to show how afterschool programs around the country are shining a light on the importance of afterschool.

Bright House Networks—a cable, phone and Internet provider—will award \$5,000 to the afterschool programs of those whose photos best depict how programs and people are shining a light on afterschool.

Beginning October 18, individuals and programs can submit photos showing how they celebrated *Lights On Afterschool*, and highlight the vibrancy of afterschool programs in their communities. The photos that receive the most votes will win cash prizes.

“Bright House Networks has been a fantastic long-term partner to the Afterschool Alliance, supporting quality afterschool programs in so many ways,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “We’re very excited about this new contest! We hope and expect to see thousands of *Lights On* *continued on page five...*”

## OUTREACH

### Promoting Your *Lights On Afterschool* Event to the Media: Pitch Calls

In this modern age of email, tweets, Facebook posts, text messages and more, one of the most effective tools for getting mainstream media to cover your *Lights On Afterschool* event is a product of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century: the telephone.

About a week before your event, be sure to let reporters or producers know the big day is coming up by sending them a media alert—preferably by email, but if that’s not workable, by fax or regular old U.S. mail. (Here are [instructions and a sample alert](#).) Then, two or three days before the event, send it again, incorporating any updates to the list of participants or other changes in the program.

After you’ve sent the media advisory letting journalists know that your event is coming up, it’s crucial that you follow up, and the best way to do that is by telephone. It’s easy to do, and probably won’t take more than 45 minutes to an hour.

### Making the Pitch

Before you pick up the phone, work out a “pitch,” something that explains who you are, why you’re calling, and what you’re hoping they’ll do. You might say, for example:

*I’m Joyce Friedlander, and I’m with the Mission Hills Afterschool Program. I’m calling to follow up on a media alert I sent you by email yesterday about our annual Lights On Afterschool rally, this coming Thursday afternoon at Mission Hills Elementary. It’s part of a nationwide celebration of the important service that afterschool programs perform for families, schools and communities, and we’re going to have the mayor, two school board members, and around 300 parents, kids, afterschool providers, teachers, business leaders and others there.*

*Our afterschool ballet folklorico group is going to perform, there’ll be a tour of the program, and we’ll hear from the mayor and the school board members, as well as a number of the kids who will talk about the importance of afterschool in their lives.*

*As I said, Lights On Afterschool is a nationwide day of rallies, and the sponsoring organization, the Afterschool Alliance, expects about 7,500 events like ours—most of them that day—and more than a million participants across the nation. And one reason it’s so important is that afterschool programs here and across the country are facing huge funding challenges, as a result of tight budgets and the recession.*

*I sent a media alert about it with all the details. I’m hoping you can cover the rally, and I wanted to see if you plan to attend, and if there’s anything we can do to help with a story.*

You might want to write out some bullet points to help you remember the pitch. Once you’ve got it together, you’re ready to start dialing! Call the same reporters or producers who received the media alert, including the news assignment desks at the various outlets. If you don’t have phone numbers already, just look up the main switchboard numbers online or in a phone book, and then ask for the

individual reporter or ask who produces segments relating to education, children, families or community news.

The best time to call is usually the morning, because in the afternoon, journalists are often on deadline. Often, you'll end up leaving a message on voice mail, and if that happens, go ahead and deliver a brief version of your pitch, adding your phone number and email address so the reporter can reply. If you don't hear back, go ahead and make a second call later that day or the following day.

When you get a journalist on the phone, deliver your pitch and then be ready to answer any questions. And remember, as reporters, editors and producers decide to cover the event or not, they'll ask themselves, "Is this news?" and "Is this going to interest my readers, listeners or viewers?" So be upbeat as you talk about the event, be ready to explain issues such as funding challenges programs face, stress any high-profile speakers (such as elected officials or local celebrities), and emphasize that students will be an active part of the event, offering good visuals for a photographer or camera crew. And be sure you have parent/guardian permission for media to use images of students who will be at the event.

Of course, be sure to keep track of the responses. They might ask you to send the media alert again. They might say they've got another story they're working on and don't know if they'll cover your event. They might say they plan to come, or that they don't plan to cover it. Keep track of it all, and follow up as needed.

And remember that whether this is the first time you've talked to this journalist or the 10th, and whether she or he comes or not, you're building a relationship—one that could result in your program being included in a story down the road, even if the outlet doesn't cover your *Lights On* event this year.

Finally, depending on how long your list of media is, you may find that it helps to take a break or two, to keep your pitch fresh. Make a few calls, then stop for a few minutes and recharge your batteries. You want your voice to convey energy, so if you start to feel like you're flagging, take a break! Here's another trick: Stand up while you talk on the phone. It'll get more energy into your voice.

When you've gone through your list, you should have a pretty good idea which reporters are planning to come. And you'll have made Alexander Graham Bell very proud!

Good luck!



## FUNDING NEWS

The Afterschool Alliance's website has numerous resources for afterschool providers looking for new ways to raise money for their programs, including tips for initiating relationships with funders and businesses, and for identifying funding opportunities.

### GRANTS/AWARDS AVAILABLE

#### Stop Bullying Video Challenge

United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan is calling on the country's youth to take the Stop Bullying Video Challenge. Youth ages 13-18 can create a 30- to 60-second video to motivate youth to prevent bullying, showcase ways teens are taking action against bullying, and promote a culture of kindness and respect in their communities. The winner will receive \$2,000, and two runners-up will each receive \$500. Learn more at <http://stopbullying.challenge.gov/>. Enter by October 14.

#### Fuse Music Grant

Fuse is seeking applications for its grant program for nonprofits (or organizations that benefit a nonprofit) that provide a positive impact on teens in the U.S. and involve music. Fuse will award \$25,000 in marketing services to a deserving youth-focused charity program within the music community. October 15 is the application deadline. The winner will be announced on November 15; grant-funded work will take place between January and December 2013. More information about Fuse is available [online](#).

#### CVS Caremark Community Grants

CVS Caremark is awarding community grants of up to \$5,000 to inclusive programs for youth under age 21 with disabilities; academic and enrichment programs at public schools; and programs that provide access to quality health care services and health education for at-risk and underserved populations. Organizations must serve communities where CVS Caremark operates; this includes organizations in the U.S. and Puerto Rico with the exception of Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington and Wyoming. The application deadline is October 31. More details are [online](#).

#### Subaru Healthy Sprouts Award

To be eligible for the 2012 Healthy Sprouts Awards, schools or organizations must plan to garden in 2013 with at least 15 youth (between the ages of 3 and 18) and connect gardening to education issues focusing on the environment, nutrition and hunger in the United States. Fifty grant packages will be awarded. Packages include: A \$400 gift certificate to the Gardening with Kids catalogue and online store; a kit of taste education and nutrition lessons; a set of hand tools and three pairs of child-size gloves; a curriculum package from the National Gardening Association; and a "Plantcam" to document the growth and changes in your garden. Applications are due October 31. Find more information [online](#).

#### Variety the Children's Charity of New York 2012 Grant

Variety the Children's Charity of New York is accepting applications for grants up to \$25,000 for grassroots nonprofit organizations in New York, New Jersey or Connecticut whose programs use the arts as a catalyst to transform the lives of children in underserved communities. Eligible applicants must have programs that fall in the Variety focus areas of performance arts (including dance, theater, improvisation, music, spoken word, hip-hop, DJing, radio, film, step and circus) or visual arts (including painting, photography, drawing, sculpture, architecture, graphics, digital art, and crafts). The application deadline is November 2, and decisions will be made by June 2013. More information is available [here](#).



## BE A PART OF THE STEMworks DATABASE

[Change the Equation](#) (CTEq), is inviting any science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) leaning program, including afterschool and school-based programs, to apply for inclusion in the STEMworks database of exemplary programs.

Through the new database, CTEq will identify and highlight exemplary programs for business leaders and funders who are looking to support high-quality STEM education efforts. [WestEd](#) will review the applicants against CTEq's [Design Principles for Effective Philanthropy](#) and provide detailed feedback on applications' strengths and weaknesses.

"While the bar is high, it is a great opportunity to highlight high-quality afterschool programs and demonstrate that we are part of the solution to the STEM education crisis in the nation," wrote Afterschool Alliance Director of STEM Policy Anita Krishnamurthi in an *Afterschool Snack* [blog post](#).

Visit the [STEMworks database](#) to apply. **Apply by October 15 for inclusion by December 1 and by November 15 for inclusion by January 15, 2013.** Programs that apply early will have the opportunity to respond to feedback and reapply, if necessary. Contact [cteq.info@wested.org](mailto:cteq.info@wested.org) with comments and questions.

NOTE: The names of programs not selected for the STEMworks database will not be released.



Lights On *continued from page one...* photos from across the country showing us how students, schools and communities are shining a light on afterschool programs."

All entries will be eligible for one of the three \$1,000 prizes; an additional \$2,000 award will be reserved for the photo with the

most votes from a program in the Bright House Networks service area.

Be sure to check out [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org) for more details on the contest!

### Take Action at Home

If you are not able to host a *Lights On Afterschool* event at your program, there are plenty of other ways to take action. Take a moment to sign an online statement recognizing the important, positive benefits afterschool programs offer.

Click [here](#) to join thousands of Americans in saying: "I support *Lights On Afterschool* and the quality afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire learning and help working families!"

Remember to register your *Lights On Afterschool* event [here](#)!



## IN THE NEWS

**ARIZONA**—During a visit to a local Pizza Hut, afterschool students at the Mohave Accelerated Learning Center in Bullhead City got a first-hand look at how pizzas are made, what steps are taken to keep the food safe, and the job skills needed to work at the restaurant. "After-school program leader Grace Hensley said the kids participate in a special activity each Friday, and that Pizza Hut trip was among last year's most popular," the *Mohave Daily News* reports.

**ILLINOIS**—Prana Yoga Center in Geneva is developing an afterschool program for teens that offers a chance to practice yoga and a space to do homework. Lori Glazebrook, the program leader and Prana Yoga Center's marketing and promotional manager, said she wanted to create the OmWork Club because there aren't many yoga programs for teens. Glazebrook told the *Daily Herald*, "Stress from outside sources was definitely

considered when designing the OmWork Club, but so was stress related to school performance, peer relationships, and the benefits of physical activity.”

**KENTUCKY**—As part of a mentoring program with the U.S. Department of Energy, 53 middle school students in Paducah will get a chance to offer their ideas for possible future uses for the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant, which has an uncertain future after next year, the Associated Press reports. The gifted and talented students will consider operations, environmental impact and socioeconomic factors behind each potential new use of the plant. Students will tour the facilities with their mentors later this month and have two more brainstorming sessions before they present their ideas.

**MARYLAND**—U.S. Rep. Donna Edwards toured the Laurel Boys & Girls Club last month and said she’d like to “continue to brainstorm ideas with the club on how it can find the resources to strengthen its programs,” the *Laurel Leader* reports. The Laurel Boys & Girls Club building was erected in 1899 as the first high school in Prince George’s County, and parts of the building are in need of repairs. Edwards spent more than an hour touring the Club and met with students in some of its afterschool programs.

**PENNSYLVANIA**—More than 130 students from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers afterschool program sites in Schuylkill County attended a STEM Saturday event at the Penn State Schuylkill campus. The afterschool students participated in different stations focusing on astronomy, physics, animal sciences and math challenges. The day was designed to inspire students to consider careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), the *Pottsville Republican Herald* reports. Organizers will host another STEM Saturday next month for students from other school

sites and hope to continue with events in the spring.

**VIRGINIA**—High school junior Carlyn Schaeffler earned the Girl Scout’s Gold Award, the highest honor a Girl Scout can achieve, after completing 65 hours of community leadership and service. For her leadership project, Schaeffler turned her passion for running into a weekly afterschool program—Running Rugrats—for elementary school children at St. Mary’s Star of the Sea School in Hampton.



## LISTEN TO THE ‘GODFATHER OF AFTERSCHOOL’

At the [Afterschool for All Challenge](#), Dr. Terry Peterson, the director of the Afterschool and Community Learning Network and the Afterschool Alliance board chair, sat down with Development Without Limits Executive Director Eric Gurna to talk about the role afterschool plays in the larger educational picture, and the importance of vital programs. Click [here](#) to listen to the interview.

On his *Please Speak Freely* podcast, Gurna interviews leaders in the fields of youth development and education to shed light on key issues and explore different perspectives. Click [here](#) for more podcast episodes.





## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“Candace tells us that she had to leave school and move elsewhere with her mom to pick crops well before the school year was complete only to return to Immokalee well after the next year had begun. ‘It seemed my entire life was about playing catch up,’ she says, ‘And this is not the way a child should feel!’ Then, while in second grade, she was put into the after-school program run by the Guadalupe Center. ‘I had amazing teachers who helped me...and I remember doing arts and crafts, going on fieldtrips, and other hands-on activities that helped me learn things I had missed while I was out of school.’ But to her, ‘the most important thing was that I received homework help—huge for me since my mother was never able to go to school and I had absolutely no one to help me at home. Before the after-school program, I didn’t turn my homework in a lot of the time because I felt embarrassed since I didn’t know how to do it.’ So Candace happily explains that ‘because of the help received, I began turning in my homework and I felt, for the first time ever, that I was not in a losing race. Even as a second grader, I knew I had been given a great gift, being part of this awesome program.’”

—Joe Landon, “[Rising Star Scholarship Winner Gives Credit to After-School Teacher](#),” *Naples Daily News*, September 29, 2012

“Whether it’s a PTA meeting, political dialogue, the latest afternoon talk show or the *American Teacher* documentary, it seems everyone’s talking about how to improve public education in America.... We believe education is a building block for a good quality of life. It’s essential to getting a job with a good wage and health benefits. An educated work force is fundamental to a community’s economic prosperity and to a person’s quality of life.... We also need to focus on what goes on outside school. Only 20 percent of a child’s waking hours are spent

in school. That means that out-of-school time—after school, weekends, summers—are just as important learning opportunities as the time in classrooms. Finally, families are essential to education success. When schools, after-school programs and families communicate and support each other, we all win.... All children deserve a quality education. Together, we can work toward solutions to make that happen.”

—Todd Gambill and William Wilson, members of the United Way of the Bluegrass Board of Directors, “[Everyone Has a Responsibility to Help Educate Our Children](#),” *Lexington Herald-Leader*, September 27, 2012

See more stories and quotes in [America’s Afterschool Storybook](#) on the Afterschool Alliance website.



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

### **October 11, 2012**

Asia Society’s Partnership for Global Learning is offering a webinar on project-based global learning on October 11 at 8:00 p.m. ET. Internationalize your classroom with projects that engage students in meaningful, real-world work to address global issues. Learn how to implement student-driven learning and use e-technologies to build authentic, humanizing connections between students and the world. Jennifer Klein, professional development and outreach coordinator at TakingITGlobal for Educators, and Honor Moorman, professional development and curriculum associate director at the Asia Society, will present. [Register online](#).

### **October 15, 2012**

Early bird registration for *Beyond School Hours XVI* will close on October 15. The conference will be held February 20-23 at the

Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront in Florida. Participants will learn how to successfully engage older youth, see best practices in action and connect with education leaders. Ron Clark, the 2000 Disney American Teacher of the Year and two-time *New York Times* bestselling author, will be the conference's keynote speaker. More information is available [online](#).

 **October 15-16, 2012**

The California STEM Learning Network is hosting the California STEM Summit 2012 in San Diego. The Summit will share best practices for STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education, connect afterschool and education agencies with STEM partners from business and industry, discover how Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards will play a key role in advancing STEM education, and more. Visit [www.castemsummit.com](http://www.castemsummit.com) for more information.

 **October 18, 2012**

The Afterschool Alliance will sponsor the 13th annual *Lights On Afterschool*, raising awareness about the benefits that afterschool programs offer to families and communities across the country. *Lights On Afterschool* is the only national rally for afterschool programs, and in recent years it has included some 7,500 events throughout the United States and at U.S. military bases worldwide. Be a part of it! For more information, to plan a *Lights On Afterschool* event or share your plans, and to sign up for free materials, click [here](#).

 **October 22-24, 2012**

The National Summer Learning Association will host its 2012 *Summer Changes Everything* national conference in Pittsburgh at the Westin Convention Center. It is the only national conference devoted entirely to summer learning programs. With nearly 60 workshop sessions, the conference will cover a variety of current topics, from health and nutrition to engaging middle school youth to policy trends. Educators can learn about developing staff to teach STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and how to perform hands-on STEM activities. The conference will also feature: a specific STEM-focused Summer Sparks session on how afterschool providers can leverage free STEM educational resources; hands-on science investigations specifically designed for afterschool and summer programs; an online curriculum of interactive and kid-friendly engineering projects; and more. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

 **October 25, 2012**

Join the Asia Society's Partnership for Global Learning at 5:30 p.m. ET on a webinar to hear from educators who are employing project-based global learning. Learn how educators have implemented a school-wide global learning program that incorporates projects and service learning across the curriculum. Teachers and the school leader from the Academy of Global Studies at Winton Woods High School in Cincinnati, Ohio, will share their struggles and successes. [Register online](#).




---

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org). The Alliance is proud to count among its founding partners the Mott Foundation, U.S. Department of Education, jcpenny Afterschool Fund, Open Society Institute/The After-School Corporation, the Entertainment Industry Foundation and the Creative Artists Agency Foundation.

\*\*\*\*\*

The *Afterschool Advocate* is produced for the Afterschool Alliance by PR Solutions, Inc., Washington, DC;  
Phone: 202/371-1999; Fax: 202/371-9142; E-mail: [advocate@afterschoolalliance.org](mailto:advocate@afterschoolalliance.org).

---